

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. Apparatus for operating a home appliance, the apparatus comprising:
an image receiver for receiving a continuous stream of gesture images of a
5 gesture performed within a field of view of the image receiver;
an image processor that receives a video signal corresponding to the
continuous stream of gesture images and recognizes the gesture based on information
contained in the video signal;
an operations processor coupled to the image processor for identifying a home
10 appliance operation associated with the gesture; and
an appliance controller coupled to the operations processor for causing the
home appliance operation to be performed.
2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the appliance controller is a voltage
15 generator for generating a voltage signal that causes the home appliance operation to be
performed.
3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the appliance controller is a pulse generator
for generating a voltage pulse that causes the home appliance operation to be performed.
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4. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:
a performance indicator coupled to the appliance controller for providing an
indication that the home appliance operation has been performed.
- 25 5. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:
a data store, readable by the image processor, for storing data representative of
the gesture and of the home appliance operation.
6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the image processor comprises:
30 an image sampler for sampling the continuous stream of gesture images to
form a discrete sequence of gesture images; and

an image comparator for comparing the discrete sequence of gesture images to each of one or more stored discrete gesture sequences, and for recognizing the gesture based on the comparison.

- 5 7. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the operations processor identifies the home appliance operation by comparing the recognized gesture with each of a predefined set of gestures, wherein each of the predefined gestures is associated with a respective home appliance operation.

- 10 8. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:
 a switch coupled to the appliance controller and adapted to be coupled to the home appliance, wherein the switch is responsive to the appliance controller for causing the home appliance operation to be performed.

- 15 9. A home appliance comprising:
 an image receiver for receiving a continuous stream of gesture images of a gesture performed within a field of view of the image receiver;
 an image processor that receives a video signal corresponding to the continuous stream of gesture images and recognizes the gesture based on information
20 contained in the video signal;
 an operations processor coupled to the image processor for identifying a home appliance operation associated with the gesture; and
 an appliance controller coupled to the operations processor for causing the home appliance operation to be performed.

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10. A method for operating a home appliance, the method comprising:
 receiving a continuous stream of gesture images of a gesture performed within a field of view of an image receiver;
 recognizing the gesture based on information contained in the continuous
30 stream of gesture images;
 identifying a home appliance operation associated with the gesture; and
 causing the home appliance operation to be performed.